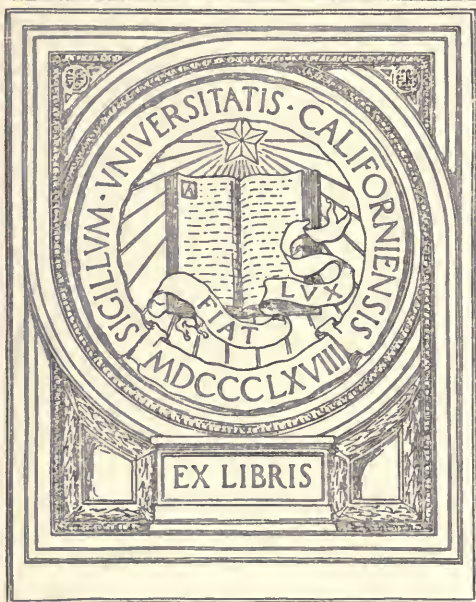


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EVERETT — DISCOVERY AND COLONIZATION OF AMERICA



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DISCOVERY

AND

COLONIZATION OF AMERICA,

AND

IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, IN
METROPOLITAN HALL, ON THE 1ST OF JUNE, 1853.

BY

EDWARD EVERETT.

BOSTON:
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LECTURE .

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY : —

ALTHOUGH I appear before you at the season at which the various religious, moral, and philanthropic societies usually hold their annual meetings to discuss the stirring and controverted topics of the day, I need not say to you that the proprieties of this occasion require me to abstain from such subjects ; and to select a theme falling, to some extent at least, within the province of an historical society. I propose, accordingly, this evening, to attempt a sketch of the history of the discovery and colonization of America and of immigration to the United States. I can of course offer you, within the limits of a single address, but a most superficial view of so vast a subject ; but I have thought that even a sketch of a subject, which concerns us so directly and in so many ways, would suggest important trains of reflection to thoughtful minds. Words written or spoken are at best but a kind of short-hand, to be filled up by the reader or hearer. I shall be gratified if, after honoring my hasty sketch with your kind attention, you shall deem it worth filling up from your own stores of knowledge and thought. You will forgive me, if, in the attempt to give a certain completeness to the narrative, I shall be led to glance at a few facts, which, however interesting, may seem to you too familiar for repetition.

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, an Italian mari-

ner, a citizen of the little republic of Genoa, who had hitherto gained his livelihood as a pilot in the commercial marine of different countries, made his appearance successively at various courts in the South and West of Europe, soliciting patronage and aid for a bold and novel project in navigation. The state of the times was in some degree favorable to the adventure. The Portuguese had for half a century been pushing their discoveries southward upon the coast of Africa, and they had ventured into the Atlantic as far as the Azores. Several conspiring causes, and especially the invention of the art of printing, had produced a general revival of intelligence. Still, however, the state of things in this respect was at that time very different from what we witness in the middle of the nineteenth century. On the part of the great mass of mankind, there was but little improvement over the darkness of the Middle Ages. The new culture centred in the convent, the court, and the university, places essentially distrustful of bold novelties.

The idea of reaching the East by a voyage around the African continent had begun to assume consistency; but the vastly more significant idea, that the earth is a globe and capable of being circumnavigated, had by no means become incorporated into the general intelligence of the age. The Portuguese navigators felt themselves safe as they crept along the African coast, venturing each voyage a few leagues farther, doubling a new headland, ascending some before unexplored river, holding a palaver with some new tribe of the native races. But to turn the prows of their vessels boldly to the west, to embark upon an ocean, not believed, in the popular geography of the day, to have an outer shore, to pass that bourne from which no traveller had ever returned, and from which experience had not taught that any traveller could return, and thus to reach the East by sailing in a western direction, — this was a conception which no human being is known to have formed before Columbus, and which he proposed to the governments of Italy, of Spain, of Portugal, and for a

long time without success. The state of science was not such as to enable men to discriminate between the improbable and untried on the one hand, and the impossible and absurd on the other. They looked upon Columbus as we did thirty years ago upon Captain Symmes.

But the illustrious adventurer persevered. Sorrow and disappointment clouded his spirits, but did not shake his faith nor subdue his will. His well-instructed imagination had taken firm hold of the idea that the earth is a sphere. What seemed to the multitude even of the educated of that day a doubtful and somewhat mystical theory; what appeared to the uninformed mass a monstrous paradox, contradicted by every step we take upon the broad, flat earth which we daily tread beneath our feet; — that great and fruitful truth revealed itself to the serene intelligence of Columbus as a practical fact, on which he was willing to stake all he had, — character and life. And it deserves ever to be borne in mind, as the most illustrious example of the connection of scientific theory with great practical results, that the discovery of America, with all its momentous consequences to mankind, is owing to the distinct conception in the mind of Columbus of this single scientific proposition, — the terraqueous earth is a sphere.

After years of fruitless and heart-sick solicitation, after offering in effect to this monarch and to that monarch the gift of a hemisphere, the great discoverer touches upon a partial success. He succeeds, not in enlisting the sympathy of his countrymen at Genoa and Venice for a brave brother sailor; not in giving a new direction to the spirit of maritime adventure which had so long prevailed in Portugal; not in stimulating the commercial thrift of Henry the Seventh, or the pious ambition of the Catholic King. His sorrowful perseverance touched the heart of a noble princess, — worthy the throne which she adorned. The New World, which was just escaping the subtle kingcraft of Ferdinand, was saved to Spain by the womanly compassion of Isabella.

It is truly melancholy, however, to contemplate the wretched equipment, for which the most powerful princess in Christendom was ready to pledge her jewels. Floating castles will soon be fitted out to convey the miserable natives of Africa to the golden shores of America, and towering galleons will be despatched to bring home the guilty treasures to Spain; but three small vessels, two of which were without a deck, and neither of them probably exceeding the capacity of a pilot-boat, and even these impressed into the public service, compose the expedition, fitted out under royal patronage, to realize that magnificent conception in which the creative mind of Columbus had planted the germs of a new world.

No chapter of romance equals the interest of this expedition. The most fascinating of the works of fiction which have issued from the modern press have, to my taste, no attraction compared with the pages in which the first voyage of Columbus is described by Robertson, and especially by our own Irving and Prescott, the last two enjoying the advantage over the great Scottish historian of possessing the lately discovered journals and letters of Columbus himself. The departure from Palos, where a few years before he had begged a morsel of bread and a cup of water for his way-worn child; his final farewell to the Old World at the Canaries; his entrance upon the trade-winds, which then, for the first time, filled a European sail; the portentous variation of the needle, never before observed; the fearful course westward and westward, day after day and night after night, over the unknown ocean; the mutinous and ill-appeased crew;— at length, when hope had turned to despair in every heart but one, the tokens of land; the cloud-banks on the western horizon; the logs of drift-wood; the fresh shrub floating with its leaves and berries; the flocks of land-birds; the shoals of fish that inhabit shallow water; the indescribable smell of the shore; the mysterious presentiment that ever goes before a great event;— and, finally, on that ever memorable night of the 12th of October, 1492, the moving light seen by the sleepless eye of the great discoverer

himself from the deck of the *Santa Maria*, and in the morning the real, undoubted land, swelling up from the bosom of the deep, with its plains, and hills, and forests, and rocks, and streams, and strange, new races of men; — these are incidents in which the authentic history of the discovery of our continent excels the specious wonders of romance, as much as gold excels tinsel, or the sun in the heavens outshines that flickering taper.

But it is no part of my purpose to dwell upon this interesting narrative, or to follow out this most wonderful of histories, sinking as it soon did into a tale of sorrow for Columbus himself, and before long ending in one of the most frightful tragedies in the annals of the world. Such seems to be the law of humanity, that events the most desirable and achievements the most important should, either in their inception or progress, be mixed up with disasters, crimes, and sorrows which it makes the heart sick to record.

The discovery of America, I need hardly say, produced a vast extension of the territory of the power under whose auspices the discovery was made. In contemplating this point, we encounter one of the most terrible mysteries in the history of our race. “Extension of territory!” you are ready to exclaim; “how could Spain acquire any territory by the fact that a navigator, sailing under her patronage, had landed upon one or two islands near the continent of America, and coasted for a few hundred miles along its shores? These shores and islands are not a desert on which Columbus, like a *Robinson Crusoe* of a higher order, has landed and taken possession. They are occupied and settled, — crowded, even, with inhabitants, — subject to the government of their native chiefs; and neither by inheritance, colonization, nor as yet by conquest, has any human being in Europe a right to rule over them or to possess a square foot of their territory.” Such are the facts of the case, and such, one would say, ought to be the law and equity of the case. But alas for the native chiefs and the native races! Before he sailed from Spain, Colum-

bus was furnished with a piece of parchment a foot and a half square, by Ferdinand and Isabella, creating him their Viceroy and High-Admiral in all the seas, islands, and continents which he should discover, his heirs for ever to enjoy the same offices. The Viceroy of the absolute monarchs of Aragon and Castile!

Thus was America conquered before it was discovered. By the law of nations as then understood, (and I fear there is less change in its doctrines at the present day than we should be ready to think,) a sovereign right to the territory and government of all newly discovered regions inhabited by heathen tribes was believed to vest in the Christian prince under whose auspices the discovery was made, subject to the ratification of the Pope, as the ultimate disposer of the kingdoms of the earth. Such was the law of nations, as then understood, in virtue of which, from the moment Columbus, on that memorable night to which I have alluded, caught, from the quarter-deck of the *Santa Maria*, the twinkling beams of a taper from the shores of San Salvador, all the territorial and political rights of its simple inhabitants were extinguished for ever. When on the following morning the keel of his vessel grated upon the much longed for strand, it completed, with more than electric speed, that terrible circuit which connected the islands and the continent to the footstool of the Spanish throne. As he landed upon the virgin shore, its native inhabitants, could they have foreseen the future, would have felt, if I may presume thus to apply the words, that virtue had gone out of it for ever. With some of them the process was sharp and instantaneous, with others more gradual, but not less sure; with some, even after nearly four centuries, it is still going on; but with all it was an irrevocable doom. The wild and warlike, the indolent and semi-civilized, the bloody Aztec, the inoffensive Peruvian, the fierce Araucanian,—all fared alike; a foreign rule and an iron yoke settled or is settling down upon their necks for ever.

Such was the law of nations of that day, not enacted, how-

ever, by Spain. It was in reality the old principle of the right of the strongest, disguised by a pretext; a colossal iron falsehood gilded over with the thin foil of a seeming truth. It was the same principle which prompted the eternal wars of the Greeks and Romans. Aristotle asserts, without qualification, that the Greeks had a perpetual right of war and conquest against the barbarians,—that is, all the rest of the world; and the pupil of Aristotle proclaimed this doctrine at the head of the Macedonian phalanx on the banks of the Indus. The irruption of the barbarous races into Europe, during the centuries that preceded and followed Christianity, rested on as good a principle,—rather better,—the pretext only was varied; although the Gauls and Goths did not probably trouble themselves much about pretexts. They adopted rather the simple philosophy of the robber chieftain of the Scottish Highlands:—

“ Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey ? ”

When the Mohammedan races rose to power, they claimed dominion over all who disbelieved the Koran. Conversion or extermination was the alternative which they offered to the world, and which was announced in letters of fire and blood from Spain to the Ganges. The states of Christian Europe did but retort the principle and the practice, when, in a series of crusades, kept up for more than three hundred years, they poured desolation over the West of Asia, in order to rescue the sepulchre of the Prince of Peace from the possession of unbelievers.

Such were the principles of the public law and the practice under them, as they existed when the great discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries took place. When the Portuguese began to push their adventures far to the south on the coast of Africa, in order to give to those principles the highest sanction, they procured of Pope Nicholas the Fifth, in

1454, the grant of the right of sovereignty over all the heathen tribes, nations, and countries discovered or to be discovered by them, from Africa to India, and the exclusive title thus conferred was recognized by all the other nations of Christendom.

On the return of Columbus from his first voyage, the king of Spain, not to fall behind his neighbors in the strength of his title, lost no time in obtaining from Pope Alexander the Sixth a similar grant of all the heathen lands discovered by Columbus, or which might hereafter be discovered, in the west. To preclude as far as possible all conflict with Portugal, the famous line of demarcation was projected from the north to the south, a hundred leagues west of the Azores, cutting the earth into halves, like an apple, and, as far as the new discoveries were concerned, giving to the Spaniards all west of the line, and confirming all east of it to the Portuguese, in virtue of the grant already mentioned of Pope Nicholas the Fifth.

I regret that want of time will not allow me to dwell upon the curious history of this line of demarcation, for the benefit of all states having boundary controversies, and especially our sister republics of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. It is sufficient to say, that, having had its origin in the papal bull just referred to of 1454, it remained a subject of dispute and collision for three hundred and sixty-one years, and was finally settled at the Congress of Vienna in 1815!

The territorial extension of Portugal and Spain, which resulted from the discovery of America, was followed by the most extraordinary effects upon the commerce, the finances, and the politics generally, of those two countries, and through them of the world. The over-land trade to the East, the great commercial interest of the Middle Ages, was abandoned. The whole of South America, and a considerable part of North America, were, in the course of the sixteenth century, settled by those governments; who organized in their Transatlantic possessions a colonial system of the most rigid and despotic

character, reflecting as far as was practicable in distant provinces beyond the sea the stern features of the mother country. The precious metals, and a monopoly of the trade to the East, were the great objects to be secured. Aliens were forbidden to enter the American viceroalties; none but a contraband trade was carried on by foreigners at the seaports. To prevent this trade, a severe right of search was instituted along the entire extent of the coasts, on either ocean. I have recently had an opportunity, in another place, to advert to the effects of this system upon the international relations of Europe.* Native subjects could emigrate to these vast colonial possessions only with the permission of the government. Liberty of speech and of the press was unknown. Instead of affording an asylum to persons dissenting from the religion of the state, conformity of belief was, if possible, enforced more rigidly in the colonies than in the mother country. No relaxation in this respect has, I believe, taken place in the remaining colonies of Spain even to the present day. As for the aboriginal tribes, after the first work of extermination was over, a remnant was saved from destruction by being reduced to a state of predial servitude. The dejected and spiritless posterity of the warlike tribes that offered no mean resistance to Cortés and Pizarro, are now the hewers of wood and the drawers of water to Mexico and Peru. In a word, from the extreme southern point of Patagonia to the northernmost limit of New Mexico, I am not aware that any thing hopeful was done for human improvement by either of the European crowns which added these vast domains to their territories.

If this great territorial extension was fruitless of beneficial consequences to America, it was not less so to the mother countries. For Spain it was the commencement of a period, not of prosperity, but of decline. The rapid influx of the precious metals, in the absence of civil liberty and of just prin-

* Speech on the affairs of Central America, in the Senate of the United States, 21st of March, 1853.

ciples and institutions of intercourse and industry, was productive of manifold evils; and from the reign of Philip the Second, if not of Charles the Fifth, the Spanish monarchy began to sink from its haughty position at the head of the European family. I do not ascribe this downfall exclusively to the cause mentioned; but the possession of the two Indies, with all their treasures, did nothing to arrest, accelerated even, the progress of degeneracy. Active causes of decline no doubt existed at home; and of these the Inquisition was the chief.

“There was the weight that pulled her down.”

The spirit of intolerance and persecution, the reproach and scandal of all countries and all churches, Protestant as well as Catholic, (not excepting the Pilgrim Fathers of New England,) found an instrument in the Holy Office in Spain, in the sixteenth century, such as it never possessed in any other age or country. It was not merely Jews and heretics whom it bound to the stake; it kindled a slow, unquenchable fire in the heart of Castile and Leon. The horrid atrocities practised at home and abroad, not only in the Netherlands, but in every city of the mother country, cried to Heaven for vengeance upon Spain; nor could she escape it. She intrenched herself behind the eternal Cordilleras; she took to herself the wings of the morning, and dwelt in the uttermost parts of the sea; but even there the arm of retribution laid hold of her, and the wrongs of both hemispheres were avenged in her degeneracy and fall.

But let us pass on to the next century, during which events of the utmost consequence followed each other in rapid succession, and the foundations of institutions destined to influence the fortunes of Christendom were laid by humble men, who little comprehended their own work. In the course of the seventeenth century, the French and English took possession of all that part of North America which was not pre-occupied by the Spaniards. The French entered by the St. Lawrence; followed that noble artery to the heart of

the continent; traced the great lakes to their parent rivulets and weeping fountains; descended the Mississippi. Miracles of humble and unavailing heroism were performed by their gallant adventurers and pious missionaries in the depths of our Western wilderness. The English stretched along the coast. The geographer would have pronounced that the French, in appropriating to themselves the mighty basins of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, had got possession of the better part of the continent. But it was an attempt to compose the second volume of the "Fortunes of America," in advance of the first. This it was ordained should be written at Jamestown and Plymouth. The French, though excelling all other nations of the world in the art of communicating for temporary purposes with savage tribes, seem, still more than the Spaniards, to be destitute of the august skill required to found new states.* I do not know that there is such a thing in the world as a colony of France growing up into a prosperous commonwealth. Half a million of French peasants in Lower Canada, tenaciously adhering to the manners and customs which their fathers brought from Normandy two centuries ago, and a third part of that number of planters of French descent in Louisiana, are all that is left to bear living witness to the amazing fact, that in the middle of the last century France was the mistress of the better half of North America.

It was on the Atlantic coast, and in the colonies originally planted or soon acquired by England, that the great work of the seventeenth century was performed, — slowly, toilsomely, effectively. A mighty work for America and mankind, of which even we, fond and proud of it as we are, do but faintly guess the magnitude! It could hardly be said, at the time, to prosper in any of its parts. It yielded no return to the pecuniary capital invested. The political relations of the

* "La France saura mal coloniser et n'y réussira qu'avec peine." — Victor Hugo, *Le Rhin*, Tom. II. p. 280.

colonies from the first were those of encroachment and resistance; and even the moral principle, as far as there was one, on which they were founded, was not consistently carried out. There was conflict with the savages, war with the French and Spaniards, jarring and feud between neighboring colonies, persecution of dissenting individuals and sects, perpetual discord with the crown and the proprietaries. Yet, in the main and on the whole, the work was done. Things that did not work singly worked together; or if they did not work together, they worked by reaction and collision. Feeble germs of settlement grew to the consistency of powerful colonies; habits of civil government rooted themselves in a soil that was continually stirred by political agitation; the frame of future republics knit itself, as it were in embryo, under a monarchical system of colonial rule; till in the middle of the eighteenth century the approach of mighty changes began to be dimly foreseen by gifted spirits. A faint streak of purple light blushed along the eastern sky.

Two things worth mentioning contributed to the result. One was the absence of the precious metals. The British colonies were rich in the want of gold. As the abundance of gold and silver in Mexico and Peru contributed, in various ways, to obstruct the prosperity of the Spanish colonies, the want of them acted not less favorably here. In the first settlement of a savage wilderness the golden attraction is too powerful for the ordinary routine of life. It produces a feverish excitement unfavorable to the healthy growth and calm action of the body politic. Although California has from the first had the advantage of being incorporated into a stable political system, of which, as a sister State, she forms an integral part, it is quite doubtful whether, looking to her permanent well-being, the gold is to be a blessing to her. It will hasten her settlement; but that would at any rate have advanced with great rapidity. One of the most intellectual men in this country, the author of one of the most

admirable works in our language, I mean "Two Years before the Mast," once remarked to me, that "California would be one of the finest countries in the world to live in, if it were not for the gold."

The other circumstance which operated in the most favorable manner upon the growth of the Anglo-American colonies was the fact, that they were called into existence less by the government than the people; that they were mainly settled, not by bodies of colonists, but by individual immigrants. The crown gave charters of government and grants of land, and a considerable expenditure was made by some of the companies and proprietors who received these grants; but upon the whole, the United States were settled by individuals,—the adventurous, resolute, high-spirited, and in many cases persecuted men and women, who sought a home and a refuge beyond the sea; and such was the state of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that it furnished a succession of victims of a long series of political and religious disasters and persecutions, who found, one after another, a safe and a congenial retreat in some one of the American colonies.

This noble theme has been treated with a beauty and a power, by one whom I need not name in this presence, (the historian of the United States,) which, without impairing their authenticity, have converted the severe pages of our history into a magnificent Odyssey of national adventure. I can but glance at the dates. The first settlement, that of Virginia, was commenced in the spirit of worldly enterprise, with no slight dash, however, of chivalry and romance on the part of its leader. In the next generation this colony became the favorite resort of the loyal cavaliers and gentlemen who were disgusted by the austerities of the English Commonwealth, or fell under its suspicion. In the mean time, New England was founded by those who suffered the penalties of non-conformity. The mighty change of 1640 stopped the tide of emigration to New England, but re-

cruited Virginia with those who were disaffected to Cromwell. In 1624 the island of Manhattan, of which you have perhaps heard, and if not, you will find its history related with learning, judgment, and good taste, by a loyal descendant of its early settlers (Mr. Brodhead), was purchased of the Indians for twenty-four dollars; a sum of money, by the way, which seems rather low for twenty-two thousand acres of land, including the site of this great metropolis, but which would, if put out at compound interest at seven per cent. in 1624, not perhaps fall so very much below even its present value; though I admit that a dollar for a thousand acres is quite cheap for choice spots on the Fifth Avenue. Maryland next attracted those who adhered to the ancient faith of the Christian world. New Jersey and Pennsylvania were mainly settled by persecuted Quakers; but the latter offered an asylum to the Germans whom the sword of Louis the Fourteenth drove from the Palatinate. The French Huguenots, driven out by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, scattered themselves from Massachusetts to Carolina. The Dutch and Swedish settlements on the Hudson and the Delaware provided a kindred home for such of their countrymen as desired to try the fortune of the New World. The Whigs of England who rebelled against James the Second in 1685, and were sent to the Transatlantic colonies, lived long enough to meet in exile the adherents of his son, who rebelled against George the First, in 1715. The oppressed Protestants of Salzburg came with General Oglethorpe to Georgia; and the Highlanders who fought for Charles Edward, in 1745, were deported by hundreds to North Carolina. They were punished by being sent from their bleak hills and sterile moors to a land of abundance and liberty; they were banished from oatmeal porridge to meat twice a day. The Gaelic language is still spoken by their descendants, and thousands of their kindred at the present day would no doubt gladly share their exile.

There is no doubt that the hardships which awaited the

emigrant at that early day were neither few nor slight, though greatly exaggerated for want of information. Goldsmith, in "The Deserted Village," published in 1769, gives us a somewhat amusing picture of the state of things as he supposed it to exist beyond the ocean at that time. As his local allusion is to Georgia, it is probable that he formed his impressions from the accounts which were published at London about the middle of the last century by some of the discontented settlers of that colony. Goldsmith, being well acquainted with General Oglethorpe, was likely enough to have had his attention called to the subject. Perhaps you will allow me to enliven my dull prose with a few lines of his beautiful poetry. After describing the sufferings of the poor in London at that time, reverting to the condition of the inhabitants of his imaginary Auburn, and asking whether they probably shared the woes he had just painted, he thus answers his question:—

"Ab, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,
 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
 Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
 Far different there from all that charmed before,
 The various terrors of that horrid shore:
 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
 And fiercely shed intolerable day;
 Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
 Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around,—
 Where, at each step, the stranger fears to wake
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake,—
 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
 And savage men more murderous still than they;
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
 Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies."

In this rather uninviting sketch, it must be confessed that it is not easy to recognize the natural features of that thriving State, which possesses at the present day a thousand miles of railroad, and which, by her rapidly increasing pop-

ulation, her liberal endowment of colleges, schools, and churches, and all the other social institutions of a highly improved community, is fast earning the name of the "Empire State" of the South.

After repeating these lines, it is scarcely necessary to say that there was much ignorance and exaggeration prevailing in Europe as to the state of things in America. But a few years after Goldsmith's poem appeared, an event occurred which aroused and fixed the attention of the world. The revolt of the Colonies in 1775, the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the battles of the Revolutionary war, the alliance with France, the acknowledgment of American Independence by the treaty of 1783, the establishment of a great federative republic, the illustrious career of Lafayette, the European reputation of Franklin, and, above all, the character of Washington, gave to the United States a great and brilliant name in the family of nations. Thousands in every part of Europe then probably heard of America, with any distinct impressions, for the first time; and they now heard of it as a region realizing the wildest visions. Hundreds in every walk of life began to resort to America, and especially ardent young men, who were dissatisfied with the political condition of Europe. Among these was your late venerable President, Albert Gallatin, one of the most eminent men of the last generation, who came to this country before he attained his majority; and the late celebrated Sir Isambert Brunel, the architect of the Thames Tunnel. He informed me that he became a citizen of the State of New York before the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and that he made some surveys to ascertain the practicability of the great work which afterwards united the waters of Lake Erie with the waters of the Atlantic, and gave immortality to the name of your Clinton.

Before the Revolution, the great West was shut even to the subjects of England. A royal proclamation of 1763 forbade the extension of the settlements in North America beyond the Ohio. But without such a prohibition, the still

unbroken power of the Indian tribes would have prevented any such extension. The successful result of the Revolutionary war did not materially alter the state of things in this respect. The native tribes were still formidable, and the British posts in the Northwestern Territory were retained. So little confidence was placed in the value of a title to land, even within the limits of the State of New York, that the enterprising citizens of Massachusetts, Messrs. Gorham and Phelps, who bought six millions of acres of land on the Genesee River, shortly after the Peace, for a few cents the acre, were obliged to abandon the greater part of the purchase from the difficulty of finding under-purchasers enough to enable them to meet the first instalments.

On one occasion, when Judge Gorham was musing in a state of mental depression on the failure of this magnificent speculation, he was visited by a friend and townsman, who had returned from a journey to Canandaigua, then just laid out. This friend tried to cheer the Judge with a bright vision of the future growth of Western New York. Kindling with his theme, he pointed to a son of Judge Gorham, who was in the room, and added, "You and I shall not live to see the day, but that lad, if he reaches threescore years and ten, will see a daily stage-coach running as far west as Canandaigua!" That lad is still living. What he has seen in the shape of travel and conveyance in the State of New York, it is not necessary before this audience to say.

It was the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, in 1789, which gave stability to the Union and confidence to the people. This was the Promethean fire, which kindled the body politic into vital action. It created a national force. The Indians on the southwest were pacified. On the northwestern frontier the troops of the general government were at first defeated; but after the victory of Wayne, and the peace of Greenville, in 1795, the British posts were surrendered, and the tide of emigration began to pour in. It was rather, however, from the older States than from foreign countries.

The extensive region northwest of the Ohio had already received its political organization as a territory of the United States by the ever-memorable Ordinance of 1787.

While Providence was thus opening on this continent the broadest region that ever was made accessible to human progress, want, or adventure, it happened that the kingdoms of Europe were shaken by the terrible convulsions incident to the French Revolution. France herself first, and afterwards the countries overrun by her revolutionary armies, poured forth their children by thousands. I believe there are no official returns of the number of immigrants to the United States at the time, but it was very large. Among them was M. de Talleyrand, the celebrated minister of every government in France, from that of the Directory, in 1797, to that of Louis Philippe, in whose reign he died. I saw at Peale's Museum, in Philadelphia, the original oath of allegiance, subscribed by him in 1794.* Louis Philippe himself emigrated to this country, where he passed three years, and is well remembered by many persons still living. He habitually spoke with gratitude of the kindness which he experienced in every part of the Union.

As yet, no acquisition of territory had been made by the United States beyond the limits of the British colonies; but in 1803 a most important step was taken in the purchase of

* Since this lecture was delivered, I have been favored with a copy of this paper by Edward D. Ingraham, Esq., of Philadelphia. It is in the following words: —

“I, Charles Maurice Talleyrand Perigord, formerly Administrator of the Department of Paris, son of Joseph Daniel de Talleyrand Perigord, a General of the Armies of France, born at Paris and arrived at Philadelphia from London, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to the United States of America, and that I will not at any time wilfully and knowingly do any matter or thing prejudicial to the freedom and independence thereof.

“CH. MAU. DE TALLEYRAND PERIGORD.

“Sworn the 19th May, 1794,
Before MATTH. CLARKSON, *Mayor.*”

Louisiana, by which our possessions were extended, though with an unsettled boundary both on the south and the north, to the Pacific Ocean. The war in 1812 reduced the Indian tribes in the Northwestern States; and the campaigns of General Jackson a few years later produced the same effect on the southern frontier. Florida was acquired by treaty from Spain in 1819; and the Indians in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi were removed to the west of the river Mississippi ten or twelve years later. Black Hawk's war in Wisconsin took place in 1833, and a series of Indian treaties, both before and after that event, extinguished the Indian title to all the land east of the Mississippi, and to considerable tracts west of that river. Texas was annexed to the Union in 1845, and in 1848 New Mexico and California came into our possession.

I have, as you perceive, run rapidly over these dates, compressing into one paragraph the starting-points in the history of future commonwealths, simply in their bearing on the subject of immigration. These acquisitions, not inferior in extent to all that there was solid in the Roman conquests, have resulted in our possession of a zone of territory of the width of twenty degrees of latitude, stretching from ocean to ocean, and nearly equal in extent to the whole of Europe.* It is all subject to the power of the United States; a portion of it has attained the civilization of the Old World, while other portions shade off through all degrees of culture, to the log-house of the frontier settler, the cabin of the trapper, and the wigwam of the savage. Within this vast domain there are millions of acres of fertile land, to be purchased at moderate prices, according to its position and its state of improvement, and there are hundreds of millions of acres in a state of nature, and gradually selling at the government price of a dollar and a quarter per acre.

* Square miles in the United States, 3,260,073; in Europe, 3,700,971. — *American Almanac* for 1853, pp. 315 and 316.

It is this which most strikes the European imagination. The Old World is nearly all appropriated by individuals. There are public domains in most foreign countries, but of comparatively small amount, and mostly forests. With this exception, every acre of land in Europe is private property, and in such countries as England, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Italy, what little changes hands is sold only at a high price. I presume the number of landholders in England is far less than in the State of New York. In the course of the French Revolution the land has been greatly divided and subdivided in France and in Germany, and is now held in small farms; but owing to the limited quantity of purchasable land, these farms, when sold, are sold only at high prices. Generally speaking, the mass of the inhabitants of Europe regard the ability to hold and occupy a considerable landed property as the summit of human fortune. The suggestion that there is a country beyond the ocean, where fertile land is to be purchased, in any quantity, at a dollar and a quarter per acre, and that dollar and a quarter to be earned in many parts of the country by the labor of a single day, strikes them as the tales of Aladdin's lamp or Ali Baba's cave would strike us, if we thought they were true. They forget the costs and sacrifices of leaving home, the ocean to be traversed, the weary pilgrimage in the land of strangers after their arrival. They see nothing with the mind's eye but the "*land* of promise"; they reflect upon nothing but the fact, that there is a region on the earth's surface where a few days' unskilled labor will purchase the fee-simple of an ample farm.

Such an attraction would be irresistible under any circumstances to the population of an old country, where, as I have just said, the land is all appropriated, and to be purchased, in any considerable quantity, only at prices which put its acquisition beyond the thought of the masses. But this is but half the tale. It must not be forgotten that in this ancient and venerable Europe, whose civilization is the growth of two thousand years, where some of the luxurious refinements of

life are carried to a perfection of which we have scarcely an idea in this country, a considerable part of the population, even in the most prosperous regions, pass their lives in a state but one remove from starvation, — poorly fed, poorly clothed, poorly housed, without education, without political privileges, without moral culture. The average wages of the agricultural laborer in England were estimated a year ago at 9*s.* 6*d.* sterling — about \$ 2.37½ — per week. The condition of the working population on the continent of Europe is in no degree better, if as good. They eat but little animal food either in England or on the Continent. We form romantic notions at a distance of countries that abound in wine and oil; but in the best governed states of Italy, — in Tuscany, for instance, — the peasantry, though they pass their lives in the vineyard and the olive-orchard, consume the fruit of neither. I have seen the Tuscan peasants, unable to bear the cost of the most ordinary wine from the vineyards in which their cottages are embowered, and which can be bought at retail for a cent a flask, pouring water over the grape-skins as they come from the press, and making that their beverage.

Even for persons in comparatively easy circumstances in Europe, there are strong inducements to emigrate to America. Most of the governments are arbitrary, the taxes are oppressive, the exactions of military service onerous in the extreme. Add to all this the harassing insecurity of life. For sixty or seventy years the Continent has been one wide theatre of scarcely intermitted convulsion. Every country in it has been involved in war; there is scarcely one that has not passed through a revolution. We read of events like these in the newspapers, we look upon them with curiosity as articles of mere intelligence, or they awaken images of our own revolution, which we regard only with joyous associations. Far different the state of things in crowded Europe, of which the fairest fields are trampled in every generation by mighty armies into bloody mire! Dazzled by the brilliancy of the military exploits of which we read at a safe distance, we forget the

anxieties of those who grow up within the sound of the cannon's roar, whose prospects in life are ruined, their business broken up, their little accumulations swept away by the bankruptcy of governments or the general paralysis of the industry of the country, their sons torn from them by ruthless conscriptions, the means of educating and bringing up their families consumed in a day by disastrous emergencies. Terrified by the recent experience or the tradition of these miseries, thousands emigrate to the land of promise, flying before, not merely the presence, but the "rumor of war," which the Great Teacher places on a level with the reality.

Ever and anon some sharp specific catastrophe gives an intense activity to emigration. When France, in the lowest depth of her Revolution, plunged to a lower depth of suffering and crime, when the Reign of Terror was enthroned, and when every thing in any way conspicuous, whether for station, wealth, talent, or service, of every age and of either sex, from the crowned monarch to the gray-haired magistrate and the timid maiden, was brought to the guillotine, hundreds of thousands escaped at once from the devoted kingdom. The convulsions of San Domingo drove most of the European population of that island to the United States. But beyond every thing else which has been witnessed in modern times, the famine which prevailed a few years since in Ireland gave a terrific impulse to emigration. Not less, probably, than one million of her inhabitants left her shores within five years. The population of this island, as highly favored in the gifts of nature as any spot on the face of the earth, has actually diminished more than 1,800,000 since the famine year; * the only example, perhaps, in history, of a similar result in a country not visited by foreign war or civil convulsion. The population ought, in the course of nature, to have increased within ten years by at least that amount; and in point of fact, between 1840 and 1850, our own population increased by more than six millions.

* *London Quarterly Review* for December, 1851, p. 191.

This prodigious increase of the population of the United States is partly owing to the emigration from foreign countries, which has taken place under the influence of the causes general and specific, to which I have alluded. Of late years, from three to four hundred thousand immigrants are registered at the several custom-houses, as arriving in this country in the course of a year. It is probable that a third as many more enter by the Canadian frontier. Not much less than two millions of immigrants are supposed to have entered the United States in the last ten years; and it is calculated that there are living at the present day in the United States five millions of persons, foreigners who have immigrated since 1790, and their descendants.

There is nothing in the annals of mankind to be compared to this; but there is a series of great movements which may be contrasted with it. In the period of a thousand years, which began about three or four hundred years before our Saviour, the Roman republic and empire were from time to time invaded by warlike races from the North and East, who burst with overwhelming force upon the South and West of Europe, and repeatedly carried desolation to the gates of Rome. These multitudinous invaders were not armies of men, they were in reality nations of hostile emigrants. They came with their wives, with their "young barbarians," with their Scythian cavalry, and their herds of cattle; and they came with no purpose of going away. The *animus manendi* was made up before they abandoned their ice-clad homes; they left their Arctic allegiance behind them. They found the sunny banks of the Arno and the Rhone more pleasant than those of the Don and the Volga. Unaccustomed to the sight of any tree more inviting than the melancholy fir and the stunted birch, its branches glittering with snowy crystals,—brought up under a climate where the generous fruits are unknown,—these children of the North were not so much fascinated as bewildered "in the land of the citron and myrtle"; they gazed with delighted astonishment at the spreading elm,

festooned with Falernian clusters ; they clutched, with a kind of frantic joy, at the fruit of the fig-tree and the olive ;— at the melting peach, the luscious plum, the golden orange, and the pomegranate, whose tinted cheek outblushes every thing but the living carnation of youthful love.

“ With grim delight the brood of winter view
 A brighter day and heavens of azure hue,
 Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
 And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.”

By the fortune of war, single detachments and even mighty armies frequently suffered defeat ; but their place was immediately taken by new hordes, which fell upon declining Rome as the famished wolves in one of Catlin’s pictures fall upon an aged buffalo in our Western prairies. The imperial monster, powerful even in his decrepitude, would often scatter their undisciplined array with his iron tusks, and trample them by thousands under his brazen feet ; but when he turned back, torn and bleeding, to his seven hills, tens of thousands came howling from the Northern forests, who sprang at his throat and buried their fangs in his lacerated side. Wherever they conquered, and in the end they conquered everywhere, they established themselves on the soil, invited new-comers, and from their union with the former inhabitants, the nations of the South and West of Europe, at the present day, for the most part, trace their descent.

We know but little of the numbers thus thrown in upon the Roman republic and empire in the course of eight or ten centuries. They were, no doubt, greatly exaggerated by the panic fear of the inhabitants ; and the pride of the Roman historians would lead them to magnify the power before which their own legions had so often quailed. But when we consider the difficulty of subsisting a large number of persons in a march through an unfriendly country, and this at a time when much of the now cultivated portion of Europe was covered with forest and swamp, I am disposed to think that the hosts which for a succession of centuries overran

the Roman empire did not in the aggregate exceed in numbers the immigrants that have arrived in the United States since 1790. In other words, I am inclined to believe, that within the last sixty years the Old World has poured in upon the United States a number of persons as great, with their natural increase, as Asia sent into Europe in these armed migrations of barbarous races.

Here, of course, the parallel ends. The races that invaded Europe came to lay waste and to subjugate; the hosts that cross the Atlantic are peaceful immigrants. The former burst upon the Roman empire, and by oft-repeated strokes beat it to the ground. The immigrants to America from all countries come to cast in their lot with the native citizens, and to share with us this great inheritance of civil and religious liberty. The former were ferocious barbarians, half clad in skins, speaking strange tongues, worshipping strange gods with bloody rites. The latter are the children of the countries from which the first European settlers of this continent proceeded, and belong, with us, to the great common family of Christendom. The former destroyed the culture of the ancient world, and it was only after a thousand years that a better civilization grew up from its ruins. The millions who have established themselves in America within sixty years are, from the moment of their arrival, gradually absorbed into the mass of the population, conforming to the laws and moulding themselves to the manners of the country, and contributing their share to its prosperity and strength.

It is a curious coincidence, that, as the first mighty wave of the hostile migration that burst upon Europe before the time of our Saviour consisted of tribes belonging to the great Celtic race, the remains of which, identified by their original dialect, are still found in Brittany, in Wales, in the Highlands of Scotland, and especially in Ireland, so by far the greater portion of the new and friendly immigration to the United States consists of persons belonging to the same ardent, true-hearted, and too often oppressed race. I have

heard, in the villages of Wales and the Highlands of Scotland, the Gospel preached in substantially the same language in which Brennus uttered his haughty summons to Rome, and in which the mystic songs of the Druids were chanted in the depths of the primeval forests of France and England, in the time of Julius Cæsar. It is still spoken by thousands of Scotch, Welsh, and Irish immigrants, in all parts of the United States.*

This great Celtic race is one of the most remarkable that has appeared in history. Whether it belongs to that extensive Indo-European family of nations, which, in ages before the dawn of history, took up a line of march in two columns from Lower India, and, moving westward by both a northern and a southern route, finally diffused itself over Western Asia, Northern Africa, and the greater part of Europe; or whether, as others suppose, the Celtic race belongs

* A learned and friendly correspondent, of Welsh origin, is of opinion that I have fallen into a "gross error, in classing the Irish, Welsh, and Scotch as one race of people, or Celts, whose language is the same. The slightest acquaintance," he adds, "with the Welsh and Irish languages would convince you that they were totally different. A Welshman cannot understand one word of Irish, neither can the latter understand one word of Welsh."

In a popular view of the subject this may be correct, in like manner as the Anglo-Saxon, the Teutonic, and Scandinavian races would, in a popular use of the terms, be considered as distinct races, speaking languages mutually unintelligible. But the etymologist regards their languages as substantially the same; and ethnographically these nations belong to one and the same stock.

There are certainly many points, in reference to the ancient history of the Celts, on which learned men greatly differ, and at which it was impossible that I should even glance in the superficial allusions which my limits admitted. But there is no point on which ethnographers are better agreed, than that the Bretons, Welsh, Irish, and Highland Scotch belong to the Celtic race, representing, no doubt, different national families, which acquired each its distinctive dialect at a very early period.

Dr. Prichard (the leading authority on questions of this kind), after comparing the remains of the ancient Celtic language, as far as they can now be traced in proper names, says: 'We must hence conclude that the dialect of the ancient Gauls was nearly allied to the Welsh, and much more remotely related to the Erse and Gaelic.' — *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, Vol. III. p. 135. See also Latham's *English Language*, p. 74.

to a still older stock, and was itself driven down upon the South and into the West of Europe by the overwhelming force of the Indo-Europeans, is a question which we have no time at present to discuss. However it may be decided, it would seem that for the first time, as far as we are acquainted with the fortunes of this interesting race, they have found themselves in a really prosperous condition in this country. Driven from the soil in the West of Europe, to which their fathers clung for two thousand years, they have at length, and for the first time in their entire history, found a real home in a land of strangers. Having been told, in the frightful language of political economy, that at the daily table which Nature spreads for the human family there is no cover laid for them in Ireland, they have crossed the ocean, to find occupation, shelter, and bread on a foreign but friendly soil.

This "Celtic Exodus," as it has been aptly called, is to all the parties immediately connected with it one of the most important events of the day. To the emigrants themselves it may be regarded as a passing from death to life. It will benefit Ireland by reducing a surplus population, and restoring a sounder and juster relation of capital and labor. It will benefit the laboring classes in England, where wages have been kept down to the starvation-point by the struggle between the native population and the inhabitants of the sister island for that employment and food, of which there is not enough for both. This benefit will extend from England to ourselves, and will lessen the pressure of that competition which our labor is obliged to sustain, with the ill-paid labor of Europe. In addition to all this, the constant influx into America of stout and efficient hands supplies the greatest want in a new country, which is that of labor, gives value to land, and facilitates the execution of every species of private enterprise and public work.

I am not insensible to the temporary inconveniences which are to be offset against these advantages, on both sides of the

water. Much suffering attends the emigrant there, on his passage, and after his arrival. It is possible that the value of our native labor may have been depressed by too sudden and extensive a supply from abroad; and it is certain that our asylums and almshouses are crowded with foreign inmates, and that the resources of public and private benevolence have been heavily drawn upon. These are considerable evils, but they have perhaps been exaggerated.

It must be remembered, in the first place, that the immigration daily pouring in from Europe is by no means a pauper immigration. On the contrary, it is already regarded with apprehension abroad, as occasioning a great abstraction of capital. How the case may be in Great Britain and Ireland, I have seen no precise statement; but it is asserted on apparently good grounds, that the consumption and abstraction of capital caused by immigration from Germany amounts annually to twenty millions of rix-dollars, or fifteen millions of our currency.*

No doubt, foreign immigration is attended with an influx of foreign pauperism. In reference to this, I believe your system of public relief is better here in New York than ours in Massachusetts, in which, however, we are making important changes. It is said, that, owing to some defect in our system, or its administration, we support more than our share of needy foreigners. They are sent in upon us from other States. New York, as the greatest seaport, must be exposed also to more than her proportionate share of the burden. However the evil arises, it may no doubt be mitigated by judicious legislation; and in the mean time Massachusetts and New York might do a worse thing with a por-

* In an instructive article relative to the German emigration in Otto Hübner's *Jahrbuch für Volkswirtschaft und Statistik*, the numbers who emigrated from Germany, from 1846 to 1851 inclusive, are estimated to have amounted to an annual average of 96,676, and the amount of capital abstracted by them from the country to an average of 19,370,333 rix-dollars (about fifteen million Spanish dollars) per annum.

tion of their surplus means that feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give a home to the stranger, and kindle the spark of reason in the mind of the poor foreign lunatic, even though that lunatic may have been (as I am ashamed, for the credit of humanity, to say has happened) set on shore in the night from a coasting-vessel, and found in the morning in the fields, half dead with cold, and hunger, and fright.

But you say, "They are foreigners." Well, do we owe no duties to foreigners? What was the founder of Virginia, when a poor Indian girl threw herself between him and the war-club of her father, and saved his life at the risk of her own? What were the Pilgrim Fathers, when the friendly savage, if we must call him so, met them with his little vocabulary of kindness, learned among the fishermen on the Grand Bank, — "Welcome, Englishmen"? "They are foreigners." And suppose they are? Was not the country all but ready, a year or two ago, to plunge into a conflict with the military despotisms of the East of Europe, in order to redress the wrongs of the oppressed races who feed their flocks on the slopes of the Carpathians, and pasture their herds upon the tributaries of the Danube, and do we talk of the hardship of relieving destitute foreigners, whom the hand of God has guided across the ocean and conducted to our doors?

Must we learn a lesson of benevolence from the ancient heathen? Let us then learn it. The whole theatre at Rome stood up and shouted their sympathetic applause, when the actor in one of Terence's plays exclaimed, "I am a man; nothing that is human is foreign to me."

I am not indifferent to the increase of the public burdens; but the time has been when I have felt a little proud of the vast sums paid in the United States for the relief of poor immigrants from Europe. It is an annual sum, I have no doubt, equal to the interest on the foreign debt of the States which have repudiated their obligations. When I was in London, a few years ago, I received a letter from one of the interior counties of England, telling me that they had in their

house of correction an American seaman, (or a person who pretended to be,) who from their account seemed to be both pauper and rogue. They were desirous of being rid of him, and kindly offered to place him at my disposal. Although he did not bid fair to be a very valuable acquisition, I wrote back that he might be sent to London, where, if he was a sailor, he could be shipped by the American Consul to the United States, if not, to be disposed of in some other way. I ventured to add the suggestion, that if her Majesty's Minister at Washington were applied to in a similar way by the overseers of the poor and wardens of the prisons in the United States, he would be pretty busily occupied. But I really felt pleased, at a time when my own little State of Massachusetts was assisting from ten to twelve thousand destitute British subjects annually, to be able to relieve the British empire, on which the sun never sets, of the only American pauper quartered upon it.

Ladies and gentlemen, my humble tale is told. In thanking you for your most kind attention, let me remind you that its first incident is Columbus, begging bread for his child at the gate of a convent. Its last finds you the stewards of this immense abundance, the almoners of this more than imperial charity, providing employment and food for starving nations, and a home for fugitive races.

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